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ABSTRACT

This paper describes child care delivery in Sweden, compares aspects of the American and Swedish systems of child care, and identifies what each country can learn from the other. Focusing mainly on the Swedish system, the first section addresses such topics as (1) the role of the State and local districts in program planning and administration, (2) problems of five year plans, (3) types of child care offered, (4) distribution of costs, (5) expenditures for sites, facilities and equipment, (6) programs for caregiver training and staffing, and (7) the historical development of Swedish child care. Subsequent sections delineate differences between American and Swedish systems in the areas of public attitudes toward and awareness of child care programs, parent participation, and the ability of citizens to influence the political system with regard to child care issues. Advantages of the American approach to providing child care are pointed out. Next, innovations in Swedish child care, such as parent insurance, services to immigrant children, school/community integration programs, sibling projects, and 24-hour child care programs are described. In conclusion, aspects of the Swedish system that might be applied to improve the American child care system are indicated. Information related to the topics of this paper is depicted in four appended charts and graphs. (Author/RH)

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CHILD CARE IN SWEDEN:

A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

by

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CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT:

WHO CONTROLS?

OVERVIEW

The Swedish system of child care and development programs involves a complex but well ordered model, comprised of both local and national components. The balance between the interests of the state for some level of nationwide uniformity in the delivery of child care and development programs and the desires of the locally powerful bodies which administer government sponsored social programs provides for an ideal basis from which to launch upon a full examination of the child care system.

The Role of The State

The bureaucracy of the child care and development system in Sweden is comprised of two basic levels of cooperation and control. While approximatelty 50% of child care funding is provided from national tax revenues, the national bureaucracy retains a suprisingly small amount of administrative attachment to those funds. The role of the state is largely

one related to a training, technical assistance and research orientation. The state social services bureau (Socialstyrelsen) sets general national guidelines for child care, reflects nationally mandated legislative direction and establishes research projects to further study the practical impact of new child care and development theories. Current research is being conducted by the state into such areas as difficult work hours, child care, sibling groups, the open pre-school and several others to be discussed later. The state produces training guides published as base material to provide input to child care teachers throughout the country. The most widely known of these materials is a four book series which began with Our Preschool (Vär forsköla) a guide to the child care curriculum and recently studied the special situations related to immigrant children in child care.

The state is also responsible for reviewing a yearly child care plan submitted by each local district (Kommun) as well as for the development of a general five year national plan for the setting of goals and objectives. These goals include the building of new child care sites and the suggestion of basic staff to student ratios. The Socialstyrelsen, also known as the National Board of Health and Welfare, determines the number of places for facilities based on reports from district analysts. In so doing, the state reserves the number of places requested by the kommun, thus coordinating the flow of

the state's money to the local level on a per child-place basis.

In its effort to provide the aforementioned national guidelines setting and child care training, the state has empowered several commissions to take part in the development of those guidelines and materials. The Family Aid Commission has led the way in much research regarding children of infant and toddler age. They have also worked to create an interest in changes in the Parent Insurance scheme so that the parents of younger children would be able to have shorter work hours as a choice for the provision of increased parent child contact. Another very important commission was the Commission on Child Centers, which began its work in 1968, and completed it in 1975. Their findings are the basis for the national Child Care Act, which came into effect in 1977. The act called upon the district governments, through enforcement by law, to engage in the following activities; 1. to offer a general pre-school program to all six year old children,
2. to work actively to increase the participation of children in pre-school and child care,
3. to offer a program of a least 525 hours a year for preschoolers.
4. to offer pre-school and child care to children under six years of age, who have a special need for support for mental, physical, social, linguistic or other reason. This will include children who live in sparsely populated areas.
5. Finally, to draw up a plan for the expansion of pre-school

activities to cover demands for five years ahead.

6. To establish as a goal the principle that community care is for everyone who has need of it.

The commission also carried out extensive work in the child development theories of Piaget and Homburger-Eriksson, They saw the development of the child as placed in a social context and related to objectives for the development of society and of human beings. They felt that an extension of the child care facilities constitutes an instrument to level class differences and to increase equality.

The Committee on Family Policy proposed that the marternity insurance which was then in force should be converted to a Parent's insurance where agreement could be reached between the mother or father on which of them was to abstain from his/her occupation to take care of the newly born child during its first 7 months and be reimbursed by the social insurance service for doing so. The Committee on Family Policy also established the fact that it is not possible to design an economic family support scheme which replaces the incomes the family receives through a further member of the family being gainfully employed. Consequently, the extension of child care will be the most important reform with regard to family policy.

The Commission on Child Environment has reported on the situation of children and families in Swedish society. The commission has stated that it is not possible to create optimal environments for children without changing the

living conditions of adults. They have looked to such issues as the right to work, equal distribution of welfare benefits, the need for parent education, the need for children to receive love from members of society, and the need to design society so that parents can combine employment with the proper care and education of their children.

The Group on Child Care, which includes representatives from the Swedish Parliament, have worked to better understand and deliver services to children in need of special support and stimulation. They have worked long and hard on the issues related to the immigrant child, parent education and manners through which to reduce family isolation. They have also worked on questions of how handicapped children are to be properly dealt with within the child care sector and on how play therapy is to be extended for children in hospitals.

SMALL IS POWERFUL: THE KOMMUN

While the word for the regional governmental form known as the Kommun is most often translated into English as "municipality," the more accurate term for it may well be "district." There are 277 Kommuns in Sweden. The population of the districts vary greatly. While Stockholm has more than 600,000 in their Kommun certain districts in sparsely populated areas can cover several hundred square miles and fewer than 75,000 inhabitants.

The social processes of the Kommun are directed through a social service agency (Social förvaltningen). Child care programs, programs for the aged, alchoholism and substance abuse programs, all fall under the purvue of the local social welfare agency.

Each Kommun is governed by a district council (the Fullmaktiga), which is quite large by American standards. Council representative are directly elected and the number of representatives is based upon the population of the district. The minimum number of representatives, for a district with less than 12,000 people, is 31. Those districts with more than 36,000 generally have 61 council members, and Stockholm leads the list in number of representatives with 101. The council acts as a mini district parliament. They are responsible for setting local policy for their district in relation to all programs administered by their regional district social services agency.

FROM PLANNING TO PROGRAM DELIVERY: 10 STEPS TO CHILD CARE DELIVERY

As it relates to child care, the flow of local power proceeds generally as follows:

1. The state assesses the need for more or different types of child care in each local district.
2. The Kommun devises a five year plan for the expansion and development of child care, taking into account the needs assessment statistics provided by the state. This plan is revised and updated on a yearly basis.
3. The first draft of the yearly plan is written by child care center administrators and teachers in consultation with Kommunal child care administrative staff.
4. The plan is then sent out toapproximately 100 selected "experts in the field," comprised of both interest groups and individuals. They are asked to critique and comment

upon the plan and make recommendations of possible changes. A short summary of the plan is also sent to individuals throughout the Kommun in order to gain further consumer and provider input.

5. The plan is next sent to the district planning department for assurrance that child care planning dovetails with all other parts of the overall human services plan.

6. The entire place goes to the Kommunal government for final approval.

7. The completed plan is sent to thestate for state approval, and establishment of the number of child care places to be funded. The number of places requested by the district for finding is usually a foregone conclusion which is not heavily questioned on the state level.

8.The state generally provides over 50% of the child care funding on a per child basis. (See Costs Section).

9. The Kommun social services administration provides administration and funding to each of the local child care programs within its juristiction. Each district is generally broken down into sub-districts for administrative purposes.

10. Each child care program separately expends their individual budgets within enumerated line item categories. As can be ascertained by the above the Kommun bears the brunt of the administrative power and control over the child care and development system in Sweden.

FIVE YEAR PLANS: FACT VERSUS FANTASY

Swedish child care and development programs are currently operating under a five year cycle which will be concluded by 1981. It was anticipated and directed at the beginning of this plan that 100,000 new slots would be built nationwide by the end of the five year plan. As we stand at the half way point in the five year cycle, most of the major authorities in the field conclude thatonly approximately 81,000 new slots will actually be provided by the end of 1980.

Since the child care need in Sweden has been escalating rapidly (16,000 were on waiting lists in Stockholm according to article of August 1978) and only approximately 22% of the children of working parents are currently receiving some form of state subsidized child care (14% in child care centers and 8% in family day care homes) the lack of a full building program is causing great consternation among parents. Perhaps a positive offshoot of this child care need has been the awakened activism of parents in many Swedish Kommuns toward organizing their areas to assure prompt, adequate response to provision of increased child care slots. Petitions were noted in many parent gathering areas such as supermarkets and library and recreation areas, calling upon the Kommun to keep its promises regarding full implementation of child care expansion.

Another interesting offshoot of the greatly increased need for care in Sweden is the fact that more individuals are considering the establishment of purely private child care facilities. Previously, when queried about why they did not endeavor to open their own programs or work in active partnership

with the Kommun to establish private or publicly funded programs, many have responded that this was something outside the realm of consideration, that this was the role of the state and local authorities and not of individuals, and finally that one just would not dare to attempt such a complicated undertaking. The intense interest expressed by these aroused parents may spur the Kommun to intensify their efforts at attempting to meet their expansion goals. While it is generally felt that this may be impossible to accomplish during this five year period, the next period from 1981 to 86 is far more certain to be closely scrutinized from the beginning by parents in order to assure the full expansion of another 100,000 child care slots.

TYPES OF CHILD CARE OFFERED

The Swedish system of child care and development provides for four basic types of subsidized child care and development arrangements. The system most similar to the form of child care used in the United States is commonly called the Preschool. It is important to note that the word preschool (förskola) is the general term used for all types of center based child care programs. In the vernacular of the Swedish working family, the term "dagis," is also often used. This is taken as a nickname for the term "barndaghem," translated as child day home. The basic preschool program is for children from the age of approximately 3 years through 6 years. The centers are generally open from 6:30a.m. to 6:30p.m., slightly longer than those most commonly operated in the U.S. The other common form of preschool is the part-time program (deltidsprogram). This program is provided to any child as a nursery school experience for approximately three hours each day. Recent national legal reform now requires that each kommun provide part-time preschool programs for all those families wishing them. In many cases the part-time program acts as an addendum to the regular full day program, housed in the same building as the full day program and providing the same educational, social and emotional growth opportunities.

FREE TIME CENTERS

In most of the child care programs operated in Sweden there is a distinct break between programs for preschoolers

(up to age 7 years) and centers for school age children (Fritidshem) The free time center is a program specifically designed for children before and after the regular school day. They are often housed in the same or neighboring buildings as the preschool programs, but in many cases seem to have little contact with the programs for younger children. Several recent experiments in the free time centers have dealt with concepts of coordination between the center and recreational activities in the community, where the center is used as a "home base," from which the child can explore the various social and cultural aspects of his community.

INFANT TODDLER PROGRAMS

Infant and toddler programs are gerally operated for children aged seven months to three years within the same building or adjacent to preschool and school age programs. The starting age of seven months in most programs is made possible by the fact that more and more parents are making use of their maternity/paternity insurance in order to stay home with their child during their first six months of life. (For a fuller explanation of this parent insurance system, see the Innovations Section). There is a continuing debate in Sweden over whether infants and toddlers should take part in day care programs at all. Certain factions claim that the presence of a young child away from their family for even a part of the working day will have a detrimental effect on the growth and well being of the child. This argument is not at all uncommon in the U.S. Other factions have taken

have taken two different standpoints. First, that it is necessary, given the economic and social times, for parents to gain and maintain employment for the long term existence, survival and benefit of their families. Infant and toddler programs are seen by them as an important link in the continuum of growth and development of the life of a working family. Other groups such as the Family Aid Agency, (Familjstödsutredningen) have found in their research, that there can be many beneficial effects from the provision of a secure, loving and supportive environment outside of the limited sphere of her family. The Family Aid Agency continues to believe that parents should have the greatest opportunity for close contact with their children, while recognizing the social and economic realities extant within society today. To this end, the Family Aid Agency has been a front runner in the development of more extensive parent insurance benefits, and an advocate for legislative changes which will provide shorter working hours for parents of very young children. (See parent insurance section).

FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES

It is important to note that while the state has a hand in the setting of general guidelines, requirements and staff-to-student ratios in child care center programs, they have left the administration and direction of the family day care home almost totally in the hands of the local authorities (kommun). Generally, family day care providers can provide care for not more than four children with an age span from infancy to twelve year olds. A by-product of the

family day care concept has been the development of what are known as three family systems. In these arrangements an individual is hired to care for the children of three working or student families in the homes of those children. In many cases, each of the three homes is used on a rotating basis. It is felt that a sense of community is established when three neighbor families can share in a child care experience, and that children sustain a sense of security and well being from the use of their own home for at least a part of that day care experience.

Family day care in Sweden is currently being seen by many of the more fiscally restrained kommun leaders as a way to deliver child care services more cheaply. Since both the state and kommun share of family day care expenses are reckoned at a lower rate than center care, it is felt, as it often also is in the United States, that more services can be delivered to more children in this manner.

Extensive experimentation is being conducted to begin to bridge the gaps between the divisions of children into very succinct age group categories.(See the section under recent innovations for a fuller explanation of the sibling group concept).

THE COST OF CHILD CARE: WHO PAYS FOR WHAT?

The general breakdown of child care funds, as of August of 1977, can be summarized as follows:

Approximate percentage of state funds	57%
Approximate percentage of kommunal funds	32%
Approximate percentage of parent fees	11%

The operating calculation of a child care center includes the staff, premises, fittings and fixtures, and other operating costs. The costs for a child care center are calculated at SKr 25 355 per place with a staff density of 4.9 children per staff member. Of this total cost, the staff cost amount to SKr 17 920, the premises to Skr 4 160, the fittings and fixtures to Skr 775 and other operating costs (food, playing materials, central administration and other costs) to SKr 2 500.

The revenues to a child care center consist of the operating grant from the state amounting to Skr 14 700, the parent's fees amounting to SKr 3 000. The net cost for the municipality per place thus becomes SKr 7 655 (according to the Memorandum dated 1977-03-08 from the Association of Local Authorities).

The capital budget for a child care center includes the building cost which is estimated on average at a total of SKr 27 703 per place (according to the Association of Local Authorities 75-08-15).

The operating cost for a family day care home is estimated at SKr 18 520. This includes payment to the child caretaker SKr 10 980, staff expenses and holiday

pay SKr 4 949, and reimbursement for expenses SKr 600.

Revenues to a family day care home consist of an operating grant from the state amounting to SKr 6 480, a basic grant of SKr 1 000, parent's fees amounting to SKr 2 800 making a total of SKr 10 330. The net cost for the municipality thus becomes SKr 8 190, per place.

As is obvious from the above, and contrary to popular belief in the U.S. general Swedish child care is not free to parents. Each kommun has a sliding fee scale which requires a small payment of even the lowest income parent to the kommun. The approximate average parent fee can be reckoned at about $50.00 per month. Parent fees in Sweden actually seem to amount to a higher percentage of the overall cost of child care than in the U.S. In California, many state subdizied child care programs receive fees on their sliding scale from fewer than 20% of their families. Thus, while fees in Sweden are spread across all income levels, and they remain quite small at higher income levels, they generally account for a larger percentage of the subsidized child care budget than in the U.S.

While the amount of funding from the state remains generally constant, the contribution of the kommun may vary somewhat depending upon the amount of fees collected from parents and the kommun's own fiscal direction regarding child care. This is perhaps where the aspect of local control can have one of its few dêleterious effects. In kommuns with more conservative administrations the contribution from the local level may be somewhat diminshed. On the other

hand, some kommun, such as Luleå, provide an amount which matches that of the state. The figures shown below, from August of 1978, indicate an increased contribution from the state level while parent contribution has remained steady. They also indicate the greater committment of Luleå kommun in expenditure for child care services:

Luleå kommun: Total cost of care,	SKr 34,000/place
State Share:	SKr 15,500/place
Parent Fees:	SKr 3,000/place
Net Cost To Luleå kommun:	SKr 15,500/place

CHILD CARE SITES - FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

One of the most signifigant differences in the delivery of child care in Sweden and the United States is the dichotomy between approaches to use of child care facilities. In the United States, where several state and federal statutes establish strict guidelines excluding or severely limiting capital outlay, (i.e. building and equipment purchase) of or on child care sites, much can be learned from the ultimately cost effective Swedish model. It is now generally accepted in Sweden that part of the cost of delivery of child care must be reckoned on the purchase or building of an adequate facility for that care. Part of the cost which the state and local authorities contribute for each slot in a child care facility is provided directly for building costs within eack Kommun. It is estimated that an average price of $27,703 crowns per child slot is required to construct a child care building. This is to say that to house 45 children in a new child care building, constructed and designed specifically to meet child care needs, will cost approximately $270,000.00 While this figure may seem a high price to pay for facilities specifically designed to meet child care needs, one need only compare practices in the United States to visualize the overall cost effectiveness of the concept of constructing child care facilities.

Using California as an example, no capital outlay funds are allowed for purchase and construction to non-profit

agencies providing state subsidized child care. Rather, money is provided on an ongoing basis to lease such facilities as churches, old office buildings and houses for use as facilities. Many rents for such facilities run as high as $800-1,000.00 per month. Within less than twenty years the state will have provided a much larger amount of funds for the lease of such property than the Swedish national government that has expended as a one time only cost for purchase and construction. This is not to mention the equity and increased property value accrued through the ownership of such a site. And even more interesting situation arises when equipment purchase policy is reviewed. Again in California a three hundred dollar per item purchase limit has been set for all equipment, recently raised in certain cases to $500.00. In order for child care centers to provide children with adequate outdoor play equipment and such things as typewriters and other office equipment, many centers are forced to lease such equipment. Thus, instead of making an outright purchase of $510.00 as would be done in Sweden, a center may lease a typewriter at $35.00 a month for five years or more. This would give the leased equipment a five year cost to the state of $2100.00 instead of the one time $510.00 purchase price.

Because most of the facilities currently used in Sweden for child care have been constructed for such a purpose, the ability to deliver optimal services is greatly enhanced. Less money is spent on a monthly basis for maintenance and upkeep of sites designed with children in mind, than those in the U.S.

which do not have such things as readily washable walls, specially constructed flooring and most usuable outside space. An important by-product which was noted was the fact that less money was spent on materials purchases in Sweden such as paper, paste, paint, etc. One theory is that because of the ability of staff and children to engage in the widest variety of indoor activities as the result of well designed space, materials used on repetitive activities while the child is seated in one position are greatly reduced. This is also related to the fact that there are larger open spaces within Swedish child care buildings with indoor climbing and gross motor areas provided.

Constant experimentation is conducted to establish the optimal child care environment. Such programs as the Maff Project (mentioned in the Innovations Section) and a continued local and national awareness of the need to develop attractive, warm and cost effective environments have contributed to constant/subtle revisions in the look of Swedish child care facilities. The inside space of child care centers on a per child basis is actually reckoned as a smaller amount in Sweden than general requirements in the United States. Approximately 30 square feet per child is required in Sweden while 35 square feet has been the general figure used in the United States. Outside space providing for a variety of stimulating experiences has been very important in the development of Swedish child care facilities. In regard to the size of the facilities themselves, a recent direction of the Swedish government has been to build child

care facilities for smaller numbers of children than was done ten years ago. The most acceptable size of a new child care facility may be reckoned at approximately 45 children. This is a greatly reduced number from the programs built for as many as 150 children.

TRAINING AND STAFFING

Two basic lines of education and training are provided for the prospective child care worker. The preschool teachers certification (Forskölarare) is a two year program which provides courses and practical experience in curriculum planning, child development, educational philosophies and such subjects as music, art and recreation for children. Educational reforms of 1977 have placed the preschool teacher's training as a general subject area within the state university system. Upon completion of the two year training period, which includes extensive periods of student teaching, a preschool teacher may take their place as a regular child care center instructor or part-time program teacher. In addition, there is a fifty week preschool teacher's training course for children's nurses (barnsjoterska) with several year's experience in preschool. The second major form of training is basically a shorter, less intensive and sometimes slightly more child health oriented certification known as the child nurse (barnsjoterska). This training is provided either as a product of the two year nursing line of the upper secondary school (gymnasium) or through special courses encompassing one year of training. The minimum age of entry into child nurse training is 16 years.

It is interesting to note that one of the difficulties within the preschool teacher and child nurse programs has been the feeling by many that a class system has been established in Swedish child care centers. Previously, there seemed to be

manifested a certain competitive anxiety between the two groups. In many centers, preschool teachers would divide themselves off from their counterparts with less training and education. There has been a recent conscious effort to bridge the gap between the preschool teachers and the child nurses through the educational reform after July 1, 1977.

Directors of child care centers have generally received a preschool teaching certificate and have several years of experience within the child care system. No specific training is provided at present for directors, but such training is currently in the planning stages. It is felt by Swedish child care teacher trainers that all staff within the center have contacts with, and influence upon, the children they serve. As a result, it is seen that even the cook at a day care center must have some understanding for, and sensitivity to, the diverse needs of the children in their care.

WORK TEAMS

One of the newer developments in Swedish child care staffing arrangements is the use of a team approach to all work within the center. This is accomplished through the use of a schedule of rotation by all staff members through all of the basic jobs in the center. For example, a director might spend two days doing extensive administration and paper work, two days of drect work with children and one day in parent contact and staff development and training. Under the same format, a teacher might spend three days with children, one day on administrative paper work, and one day on parent conferences and materials

purchasing. In the programs where this has been tried, the level of success seems to have been high. Staff have commented that their work is far more varied, and they feel that they are in a more responsible and important position in sharing the full administration of the center. Attempts are now being made for this approach to be used as an entree to greater parental contact with the center, where parents may rotate through different assignments or duties on a monthly basis.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SWEDISH CHILDCARE:

THE FAMILY'S BRIDGE TO THE MODERN WORLD

The role of child care in Swedish society has changed drastically since its beginnings in the 19th century. Day care nurseries were devised to care for the children of poor, often single mothers forced to seek employment in order to support their children. They were seen by the Swedish society of the day as a necessary evil, and were treated as a form of welfare style minimal relief. The emotional and social needs of the children were not of high priority in the delivery of this service. Around the turn of the century kindergartens were introduced based upon vastly different concerns and ideals. They were established as havens for the educational and social growth of middle and upper class children.

The day care center of today is intended for all children, with an intention to first service those whose parents are working or studying. The social-emotional-educational direction of the early kindergartens has been melded with the most positive aspects of providing a secure and loving environment while the child is away from his family.

The rise of the day care program has also had a direct correlation to the economic development of Swedish society, and to the national women's movement. Before society became more heavily industrialized, the majority of individuals had their work place within the home environs. As farmers, craft persons, homemakers, bakers, etc., their work kept them far more physically and emotionally related to the home.

Family units were large and extended. With the advent of a more highly industrialized society, family units dispersed, with individuals moving farther from their homes for work, and the numbers of children per family declined markedly. The need for child care became more and more apparent as the number of women in the work force continued to increase. By 1975, approximately half of the married women with preschool children were working. As women asserted their economic and social roles as having a full and equal right to employment and educational opportunities, it became increasingly clear that the care and education of children was no longer confined to their mothers alone, rather the responsibility for children is a common task in the society.

HOW THE COMMUNITY SEES CHILD CARE:

HIGH PROFILE OR LOW -- AN AMERICAN DILEMNA

At the core of the development of Swedish child care to its current level of basic community acceptance and understanding, lies an image of child care as a crucial and necessary community resource without which substantial social, economic and emotional deterioration would take place. This image has been fostered through continued national and local publicity on the needs of the child and the family, legislative debate on working conditions and their clear interaction with child care need, and most of all a continuing sense of the importance of the preservation of a safe, secure, stimulating, unchanging environment for the child in the face of constantly changing working and social conditions for her

parents. In effect, the profile of child care in Sweden is an extremely high one. The awareness of what child care is and does by the average Swedish citizen, if far greater than that understood by the average citizen in the United States. Because this understanding of child care as a proven resource more fully permeates all phases of Swedish life, the basic institution of child care is far more impenetrable to challenge, and eventual cutbacks. As one high ranking official put it," It would be political suicide for any major party to be without some form of well considered, well funded child care program."

The fact that child care in America has a much lower, less stable profile as a community institution, may have its basis in a subtle difference in historical perspectives. While the early stages of child care delivery in a subsidized form were linked in both countries to welfare relief for the poor, an important divergence has taken place within the Swedish system. In the American system of subsidized delivery, child care continues to be seen by the general American public as a welfare service. This welfare profile linkage has caused many individuals not participating in or aware of the finer nuances to condemn child care as just another taxpayer's headache in supporting the poor. In Sweden, as the welfare link day nurseries began to more completely meld with the middle and upper class kindergartens some shift in community image began to take place. The late arrival of the industrial revolution, with an increased awareness of the role of the woman in the work force, aided in the continuing image shift, child care began to be seen more and more as a service related

to employment and education rather than welfare. The final step in the profile raising cycle is currently taking place. Child care programs are now viewed by many parents who do not need to maintain full time employment as the most stimulating possible environment for the full growth and development of the child. This, while the welfare relatedness pattern of the American system still remains generally unbroken, the Swedish system has taken a far different place as an employment and education conduit for parents and a stimulating growth experience for children. The American system may have been at the threshold of such changes until June of 1978. With the passage of California's Proposition 13, and other state and federal amendments, child care again has undergone new scrutiny and testing. The coming months will provide us with a better picture of whether the most current crisis affecting subsidized child care will be weathered, and further answer questions regarding whether survival of this difficult economic time will serve to raise the American child care profile within the eyes of society.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: WHERE THE UNITED STATES TAKES THE LEAD

As must seem evident by this point, advances in child care delivery in Sweden have proceeded at a far more rapid rate than those in the U.S., on a general basis. There are however, certain areas under which the American system can provide clear guidelines and research models in order to enrich the Swedish perspective. One of the areas of greatest interest to Swedish child care and development experts

is that of parent involvement and participation in the programs of their children. Swedes have been discussing various methods by which parents could be released from work time on some regular basis in order to participate in the programs of their children. Non-working parents are also being considered for experimental programs in parent cooperative preschools. The delivery of child development services through parent cooperative efforts has had a long history in the U.S. For the past 30 years, extensive experimentation has been carried out by private independent groups throughout the U.S. in various approaches to involving parents as part-time teachers, role models, or assisstants or co-workers to trained staff. The Family Aid Agency (Familjstödsutredningen) and the National Bureau of Health and Welfare (Socialstrylesen) have begun serious consideration of various models for delivering services similar to those which have been quite fully developed in the U.S. over the past several decades. A related area of great Swedish concern has been the general lack of parent involvement within the regular child care program in Sweden today. Parent involvement components of such programs have been quite slow to develop and follow through at this time has been rather limited. In the U.S., many state funded child development systems have required local programs to provide guidelines for regular parent input within their program. Such things as parent advisory groups, boards of directors groups with strong parent representation and parents included on

staff hiring committees have been fairly commonplace in the U.S. In Sweden both staff and parents have noted a continuing distance between the "experts" and the parents. Many parents interviewed expressed some reticence to fully share personal reservations about the child care program, or some aspect of it because they felt either that their lack of training gave them no "say so" or that certain members of the staff did not really respect their opinion. While similar concerns have been expressed in state subsidized programs in the U.S., a more formalized approach to this problem has been in place in many areas for quite some time. Efforts are currently under way in Sweden to implement parent involvement programs and further develop and refine a system of parent cooperative preschools. It has been claimed that the lack of parent-staff interaction and reticence of the parents to become more fully involved is not only caused by the fact that parents do not have a defined role in the function of their child's program but also because of the natural Swedish cultural respect for authority and credentialling. Certain agencies, while accepting this cultural reserve and reticence in the face of this great respect for and at times fear of "those who have papers," have instituted definitions of clearer roles so that parents can be more comfortable with a specific niche through which to direct their involvement. This approach may be the most effective in breaking down the invisible barrier between parents and staff in a slow, gentle manner. One excellent program developed at least in part as an

experiment in providing greater parent input and cooperative effort between staff and parent has been the "child care flats," experiment. In this program several flats in downtown Stockholm were made over into small child care centers. After being made over, the local administrative body in a public ceremony "gave over," major responsibility for the operation and control of the center to the parents and staff on a combined effort basis. These programs have thus far met with a high level of success.

IMPACTING THE POLITICAL SYSTEM:

SWEDEN VERSUS THE UNITED STATES

While the profile of child care in Sweden is far higher than that in the United States, and greater progress has been made to this juncture in full implementation of quality programs, there remains a rather signifigant nuance separating the ability of Swedes and Americans to have impact upon their respective political leaders as related to child care. In Sweden, the party reigns supreme. This is to say that the five major and several minor political parties seem to gain and maintain power and voter approval through the establishment of detailed, regularly revised party platforms, and assistance of party coalitions. These party platforms are largely created by the "Central Committee," leadership of each party. For example, while the Social Democratic Party remained in power for several decades they needed strong assistance in the later years of their dominance through voting block coordination with the left party Communists (V.P.K.) For many years the three major center and right parties had attempted to unseat the Social Democrąts. It was not until 1977 , that these three parties were able to form a strong enough coalition to finally gain control of the parliament. The coalition was a short lived one and met its demise quite recently over a split in the approach to the question of nuclear power use. New alignments of the party coalition are currently under way.

In the United States, while child care continues to languish on the back burner in most areas, the basic ability of the American voting public to move child care to a higher priority if they desire to do so, is clear. During the past several years, clear distinctions between the major American parties have eroded substantially. First, liberal or conservative seemed to replace democrat and republican as the prime term used in capsule definitions of a legislator's leanings. More recently, because of tremendous voter pressure around greater national and state fiscal constraint, nearly every legislator has needed to represent him or herself as a fiscal conservative, regardless of any other party affiliations or general directions. If a group of constituents were to approach a state or national legislator in the U.S., regarding the introduction of a bill, that legislator would generally quite promptly be able to inform those people who have brought the bill to him (supporters), that he would or would not be willing to carry that legislation. His or her decision would be predicated far less on general party ideology, than on personal areas of interest and local and national voter direction.

Thus, it can be readily ascertained that the impact of the individual voting constituents of an American district upon their elected official can be in most cases far more direct and prompt that its counterpart in Sweden. What remains is for enough of the American public to decide that they will refuse to support individual candidates who do not have strong enough voting records in the area of child

care and development.

One might query why the Swedish system of child care and development has proceeded through its development stages at a far more rapid pace than its counterpart in the United States, given the aforementioned governmental restraints. Because of late but rapid industrialization, and with it a fuller, more comprehensive understanding of the needs of the working public for the care of their children, child care began its more rapid development. It has long been the consensus of nearly all of the major political parties that the provision of optimal human services in Sweden by the government is crucial for the well-being of Swedish society. Given the framework of a fuller acceptance from an earlier stage of the provision of such systems as subsidized health care and related social services, the natural movement in party philosophy came quite rapidly to encompass the need for provision of quality care to children. In the U.S., the jury is still out in many quarters as to whether child care is indeed a viable and productive direction for the use of state and national funds. Finally, as has been previously mentioned, the role of the woman in the work force seems to have been more promptly and fully recognized by both male legislators and voters, in Sweden. Because of the greater ease which Swedes seem to have experienced in acceptance of the transition in woman's role from home care-giver and provider to co-equal and coworker, a more complete recognition of society's role in supporting the family through the provision of child care has developed.

This greater recognition and prompt response to the fact that not only has the woman's role in society changed but also that of the child and family in reaction to it has given the Swedes an approximately five to ten year "headstart," over such conceptions in the United States.

INNOVATIONS IN SWEDISH CHILD CARE

Some of the more recent developments impacting upon the life of the young child in Sweden shall be examined herein.

PARENT INSURANCE

One of fascinating aspects of the comprehensive child care delivery system is the provision under the Swedish National Insurance System for special parent allowances. There are three major types of parent insurance allowances.

1. In connection with birth or adoption of a child and admission of a foster child. When a new baby is born, one of the parents may be paid for staying home with the child for 180 days. The days should be used before the child has reached 270 days old. The mother is entitled to 60 of the 180 days before delivery. Any day of which a child is either partially or fully cared for by the child's parents counts as a day of benefit. For example, if the young child is cared for half of the day by the parent and the other half by another individual, the day counts as a full benefit day. If each of two parents has cared for the child for a half day, the day also counts as a full benefit day. The amount of the benefit is the same as the amount which the parent receives as a sickness allowance under the Swedish National Health Insurance System. That benefit is generally 90% of the regular income for gainful employment, and never less than 32 crowns (approximately $7.00) per day.

2. Special Parent Allowance. Aside from the regular parent's allowance mentioned above, there is also an additional parent insurance benefit. This benefit is for 90 days which can be

shared in equal parts by the parents. One parent can, if they wish, assign days to the other parent. The 90 additional days can be used at any time until the child has reached 8 years of age, or until the child's first regular school year. Parents have a choice between full, half or quarter days in using the special parent allowance. As many as 60 days of the special allowance can be used at the same rate of recompense as the sickness allowance (90% of regular pay). The remaining 30 days are paid at the rate of 32 crowns, again approximately $7.00, per complete day.

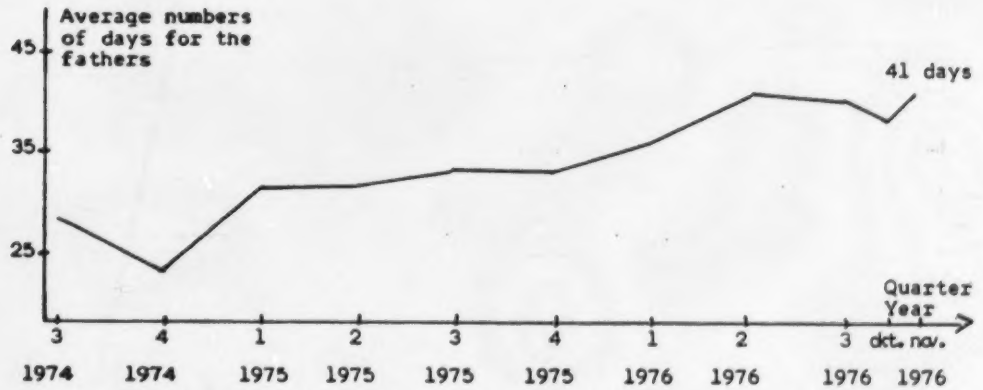
3. Parent allowance for caring for sick children.

When a child is ill, and must stay home from child care, other children's programs, or even if the child is enrolled in no program, and parents are gainfully employed or engaged in studies, a sick child care allowance is available to them. This allowance is available for their own child, a foster child or an adoptive child, under the age of 10. When a father stays away from his normal work while involved with the birth of a new baby, in order to take care of children under 10 living in the home, he is entitled to the same sick child care allowance. The number of days of allowance per year relates to the number of children within the family. With one child, 12 days peryear can be taken, and with two or more children, 15 days per year can be taken, and with two children under 10 years of age, 18 can be taken. The rate of payment for these days is also generally equal to the 90% of regular pay allowance under the Swedish National Insurance System.

At present, one day per year is also allowed under the Parent Insurance scheme for the parent to visit with and be involved with the child care arrangement of their children.

How Is The Parent Insurance Paid For?

It is interesting to note that the major burden of payment for Swedish National Parent Insurance falls not upon the parent but upon the work place. The employer premium paid to the Swedish National Insurance covers approximately 85% of the overall expenditure, while the remaining 15% of costs are met by the state out of the national budget. In 1977, the expenditure for the Swedish National Parent Insurance System was estimated at approximately $37,000,000. Of this, approximately $31,500,000 was expended on parental benefit connected with child birth and maternity/paternity leave, and the remainder was expended on parental benefit in connection with temporary care of children.



This diagram does not reflect, nor does the breakdown of financial statistics, the special parent's allowance (described under #2 above) which did not begin until the most current reform. The current form of parent insurance was begun on January 1, 1978. The most important new development still

under consideration by the Swedish Parliament is a decrease in the regular number of hours worked by the parents of a preschool child, from 8 hours to 6 hours per day. This motion was introduced before the last session of Parliament and did not obtain a sufficient majority for implementation. The Family Aid Agency (Familjstödsutredningen) was one of the prime supporters of such a new direction. It was felt that because of continuing inflation and a less stable economy that a decrease in work hours and an increase in employer burden in terms of payment to the National Insurance might cause too great an economic hardship. This issue, though, has not been laid to rest. Many parents and child care and development advocates are continuing to advocate for the implementation of a shorter work hours program, until the child has reached the school age of seven years. In interviews with both employers and parents, while the economic constraint upon the employer was high, many employers felt that productivity was increased because of more satisfied, committed and motivated staff who felt that their employer had a clear awareness of the needs of their family.

IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

Out of every 100 children living in Sweden today, approximately 7 are from immigrant families, currently residing on a permanent basis in Sweden. As the immigrant population in Sweden increased over the last ten years, many attempts were made to most fully integrate immigrant children into the child care programs. In the early '70's,

it was felt that children from the same cultural, linguistic or ethnic backgrounds may feel more comfortable and secure by being grouped with other children of like backgrounds in child care environments. Research in the area showed that what resulted was a type of "ghetto-izing," of non-Swedish children. Instead of fostering security and interpersonal stimulation in the native language, a sense of isolation and concern about individual differences was fostered. More recently every attempt has been made never to place more that 2 or 3 children of like non-Swedish origin in any one child care group. The constant direction of the Swedish child care program in relation to the immigrant child, is now toward the actualizing of that child's full potential for learning Swedish and becoming an integrated part of Swedish children's society. This is not to say that the new direction includes an attempt to press the non-Swedish child and family to cast off their cultural and linguistic heritage. Quite the contrary, case is actually true. A recent national reform called for the establishment of home language tutors for any family wishing them, so that an immigrant child would be able to learn the language of his heritage at his own pace, in the comfort and security of his own home environment. One of the primary reasons for the establishment of such a program was the finding that immigrant children who began to use Swedish as their sole and primary language became isolated and distant from their parents who have have had far less

conversance in Swedish. The establishment of the new in-home language program is in effect attempting to build a bridge back to the stronger cultural and linguistic ties of a mono-lingual family. Clear evidence of the strong emphasis placed throughout the Swedish child care system upon the most comfortable and effective involvement with the immigrant child is the book published by the National Social Services Board, as a part of the training manuals for all preschool staff and parents. Book number four in the series is entitled

Another report of signifigance also published by the Swedish National Social Service (Socialstyrelsen) is entitled Six Year Old Immigrant Children in The Preschool. This document is actually a statistical breakdown of the numbers of non-Swedish children in child care by region as well as a look at several specific problems facing immigrant children. The first book mentioned is very widely published and points up the sensitivity for and understanding of the unusual problems faced by the immigrant child in a foreign country. One of the difficult problems which has naturally developed as more immigrants have come into Sweden, is the fact that certain child care centers in regions of high immigrant population have over 60% immigrant children within their centers. Special attention obviously has to be paid to the fact that it is far more difficult to integrate children into a cultural and linguistic system when the majority of their peer role models and meighborhood contacts come from their nation of origin. This delicate balance between the fostering of respect for the

first language→of optimal skills for operation within the Swedish culture is a continuing challenge to Swedish child care and development experts.

THE MAFF PROJECT

In an attempt to further integrate the day care center into the everyday life of the community, the Maff Project was instituted. This project, whose title comes from an attempt to look at a many sided approach to the use of child care space, is funded by the Swedish State Department of Health and Welfare. Ronald Colven, a professor of Architecture at the Royal School of Architecture in Stockholm, is one of the leaders of the project. The project is attempting to take a fresh look at the ways in which the community can make better use of the physical facilities offered by the child care centers. Experimentations in room designs, using accordian walls and moveable wall and platform areas, may enable child care centers to become general community centers in various areas where a high need for more community buildings exist. The Maff project is also closely scrutinizing current architecture in Swedish child care with an eye toward creating optimal environments for infants, toddlers, school age children and staff as well. In comparison with American facilities, Swedish child care centers seem absolutely luxurious. One of the greatest differences in space development within centers is the amount of attention paid to the comfort, convenience and rest requirements of staff members. Each new center in Sweden is equipped with a staff

changing room and shower, as well as a fully equipped kitchen/ lounge area. The Swedish government sees the development of optimal conditions for staff as a reasonable, cost effective way to prevent staff turnover and provide the fullest opportunity for staff to devote the most energetic, alert and peaceful energy to the children being served.

SIBLING GROUPS:

Experimental programs are being conducted within child care centers as an attempt to deal with the complex problems presented by substantial changes in the configuration of the family unit in Swedish society. Sweden currently has an average of less than 2 children per family. An increasing number of children live in single parent families, or in family units not considered traditional by the mainstream of Swedish society twenty years ago. The sibling group approach takes as its base the concept that children of widely varied ages can effectively interact in a warm, closely knit, supportive milieu most closely resembling that of an extended family. Instead of the more traditional approach of grouping children in separate infant-toddler, preschool and school-age programs, the sibling group provides an environment in which children from 7 months to 12 years of age make up the membership in a group of up to 15 children and three staff members. The groups take on the look of a large family as older "siblings" leave for and return from public school, leaving the "home base" to the infants and preschoolers and their adult "family members," during the middle of the day. One of the projects currently under study is located at "Tyreso," a suburb of Stockholm.

Prior to the implementation of this sibling project, the center had operated in the more common format of separate infant care, preschool and before and after school programs. Difficulties had been noted, particularly in the aggressiveness of the school age children. According to staff members, after the first year of the project, the level of violence and aggressiveness had decreased markedly. The influence of the "family need," for greater care-giving and responsibility sharing in the sibling groups has seemingly boded well for the school age child.

Of the different sibling group units observed, the three projects with staff who indicated a "full committment," to the concept of the sibling group were operating as cohesive, mutually supportive family units. The fourth group, whose staff indicated some serious questions as to their committment to the concept of sibling groups, seemed to break down into the more common vertical groups with the basic structure more favored by the more "doubtful staff." Those children spent a greater amount of time with children of their own age and were less involved in the responsibility of provision of care to younger children, and taking part in cross-age games and activities. In the working sibling groups young children are provided with a variety of role models and older children feel a sense of protectiveness and responsibility. The sibling group will be further reviewed by sociologist research teams for possible broader implementation.

THE DEBATE OVER NIGHTTIME CHILDREN

A state research project is currently endeavoring to make

some definitive statements regarding the feasibility of child care offered in centers on a 24 hour basis. A project in the nothern city of Lulea was designed to serve the children of workers with unusual work hours, i.e. hospital and shift factory workers. During the tenure of this project, a debate within the community has been taken place with regard to whether a child should "sleep over" in a child care center environment. The factions seem organized around two major areas of concern:.

1.AThat a child should not be forced to sleep in an "institution," and that there are existing "viable" alternatives for the parent with unusual work hours.

2. A. Those on the other side of the debate point to the fact that especially in the more rural areas with factories operating on round-the-clock bases, 24 hour child care settings are necessary for the well being and growth of the family unit, and that a safe, secure environment is necessary for the child regardless of the hours of work of his or her parents. B. That not enough "in home" care exists in rural areas in the late night hours.

As this research project continues, questions will be answered regarding whether the family unit remains cohesive when children sleep during the time that their parents work and play during their parent's sleep hours, the parent having only a short period of the day to spend with their child. Some experimentation is taking place in adapting the schedule of the child to the

parent as well. It is interesting to note that some similar experiments have been carried out in the United States, with limited success. The one project which seems to have met with the greatest overall success in the U.S. is located in the California/Nevada border city of South Lake Tahoe. In this community, the types of employment undertaken by a large number of its citizens neccessitates the provision of difficult work hours child care.

While the Swedish research project looks at round the clock services to families, it also is able to gain greater information on child care related to specific shifts of work, including early morning and late evening time difficulties.

WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM ALL OF THIS?

After examining and comparing various aspects of the Swedish child development system in relation to its North American counterpart, it is important to ascertain how this information can be applied to improve child care in the United States.

1. Local Administration. The fact that Sweden has as its administrative base for the delivery of child care services a locally configured body, is important in several respects. Local community need is more readily taken into account, and a more personalized approach to the individual child care concerns of each family can be facilitated. The centralized bureaucracy at the local level can provide prompt, direct response to fiscal, administrative and logistical problems which quite commonly arise in the delivery in any human services program. While there are obviously difficulties in any type of administrative system, whether local or national, the regional approach has clearly eradicated a greater number of problems in service delivery than those experienced in such state-wide systems as California. Because the districts (Kommun) are small enough, staff to individually funded local programs tend to feel a greater sense of connection with the bureaucracy which oversees them. It is important that child care programs within the U.S. carefully consider this model.

2. The Impact of Diminished State Accountability. As an adjunct to #1 above, it is important to consider the

effect of a system which with less state control over local service delivery, views accountability not as a policing function, but rather as a support service. Much debate has been carried out in the U.S. on the role of licensers and program analysts as needing to "police" the system which they oversee. The general theory behind state and local compliance review is to act as a program support service which gives individual child care centers and family day care homes a teamwork role in the elimination of assessed shortcomings. This approach seems to effectuate a far greater "desire to comply," by local programs and eliminates a great deal of the counterproductive hostility now present around such issues in the United States.

3. Training. The programs providing two year and one year basic training and in-service experience in Swedish child care can be looked to as effective models in the provision of professional certification of child care workers. The one year program, undertaken by many individuals without previous college experience, would seem quite adaptable to the need in the U.S. of a more effective, comprehensive, training system for those who do not desire a full college or university experience. The curricula of both the two year and one year program, because of their strongly practical orientation and their intensive approach to in-service training, are most effective in producing staff with the broadest range of knowledge necessary to the child care teacher.

4. Building and Site Purchase. The United States can learn much from the Swedish approach of designing and building facilities expressly for child care, and purchasing rather than leasing equipment used therein. In California, for example, as well as on the federal level, certain small changes in the law would be necessitated in order to provide sufficient capital outlay funds to child care programs so that long term leasing wherein an item is in effect purchased three times over, can be eliminated.

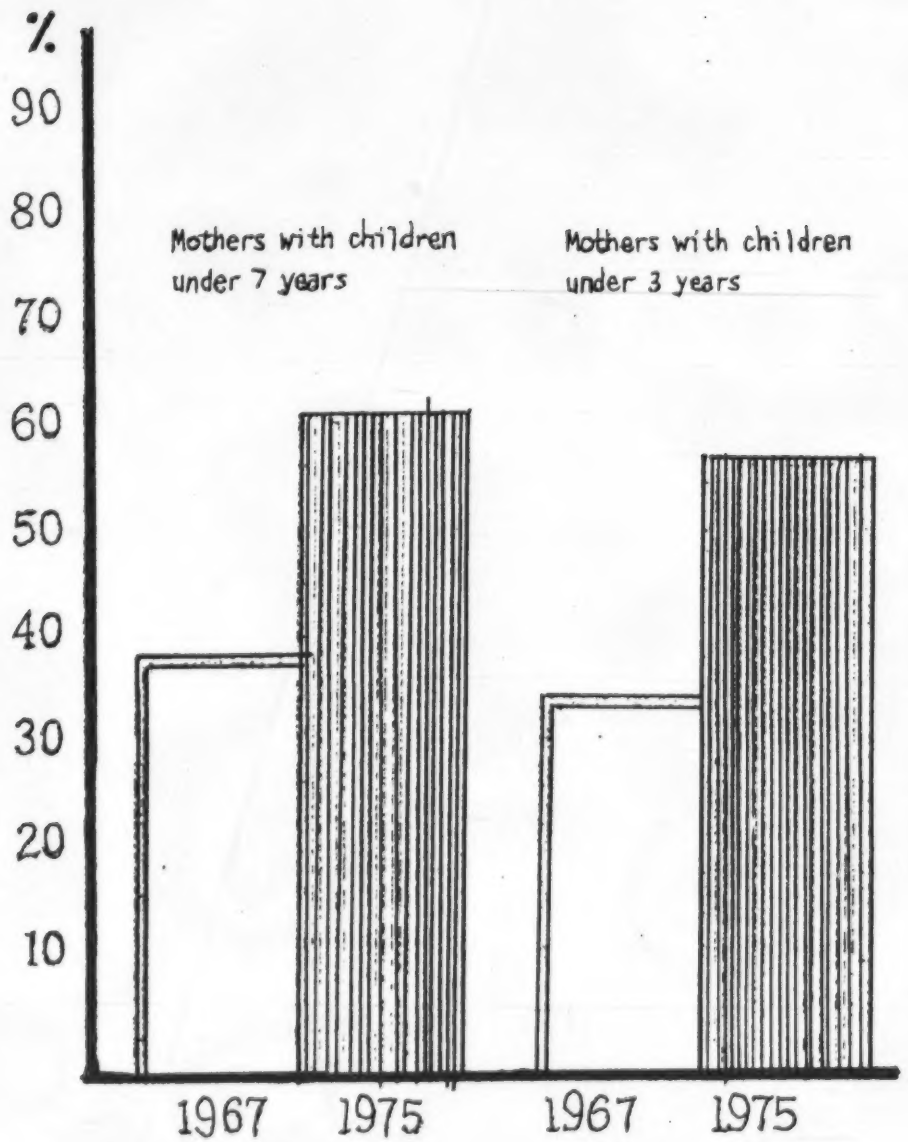
5. Zoning. Contrary to the approach in most areas in the U.S., child care centers and family day care homes are seen as compatible with residentially zoned areas. Many neighborhoods in Sweden take a sense of pride in their local child care facilities and have stated that no respectible community in Sweden would be without one. Child care is seen as a clear neighborhood support service and an asset rather than a detriment to local property values. Attempts are being made in California to institute some level of uniformity in child care zoning. If child care were seen as a compatible use in a variety of zoning locations, development of programs both public and private, would be greatly facilitated. Swedish planning and zoning language can be used as effective models in the development of approaches to child care zoning in the United States.

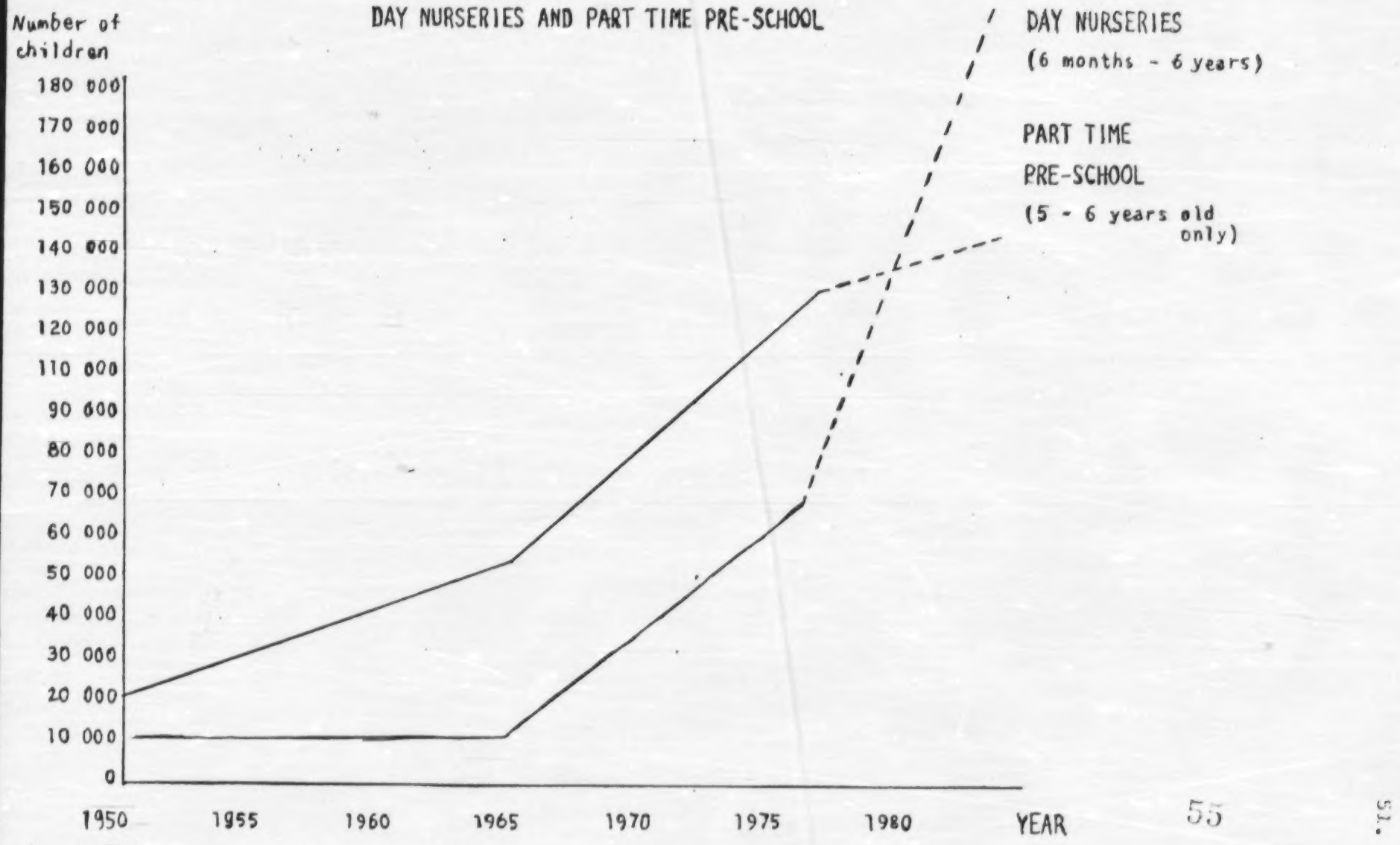
6. Raising the Profile. If the U.S. is to succeed in increasing the quantity and quality of child care services

provided to families and children, it must look carefully at how Swedish organizations and agencies inform the voting public and the lawmakers of the need for such services. Extensive media campaigns including posters, newspaper articles, television features, etc., have raised the profile of child care to one of extremely high interest and priority in the minds of Swedish citizens. Thus, although it is more difficult to impact individual Swedish legislators, the breadth of support for child care is such that advocates are continually able to have child care and development interest adopted as portions of the platforms of each major party. If the United States citizens interested in the provision of quality services to children learn nothing else from the Swedish approach, it is fervently hoped that they are cognizant of the conscious effort made by Swedish child advocates to maintain, impact upon the Swedish public clearly informing them that child care is a necessity for the social and economic well being of the nation, and not a luxury.

APPENDIX: SOME HELPFUL CHARTS AND GRAPHS

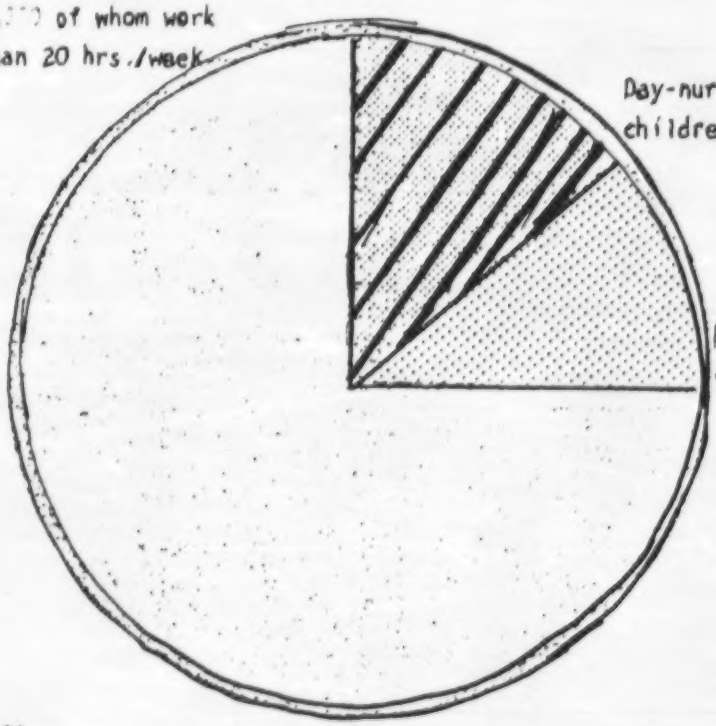
WORKING MOTHERS




DAY NURSERIES AND PART TIME PRE-SCHOOL
Number of children
180 000
170 000
160 000
150 000
140 000
130 000
120 000
110 000
90 000
80 000
70 000
60 000
50 000
40 000
30 000
20 000
10 000
0
1950
1955
1960
1965
1970
1975
1980
YEAR
DAY NURSERIES
(6 months - 6 years)
PART TIME
PRE-SCHOOL
(5 - 6 years old only)

CHILDREN WITH WORKING PARENTS 1975.

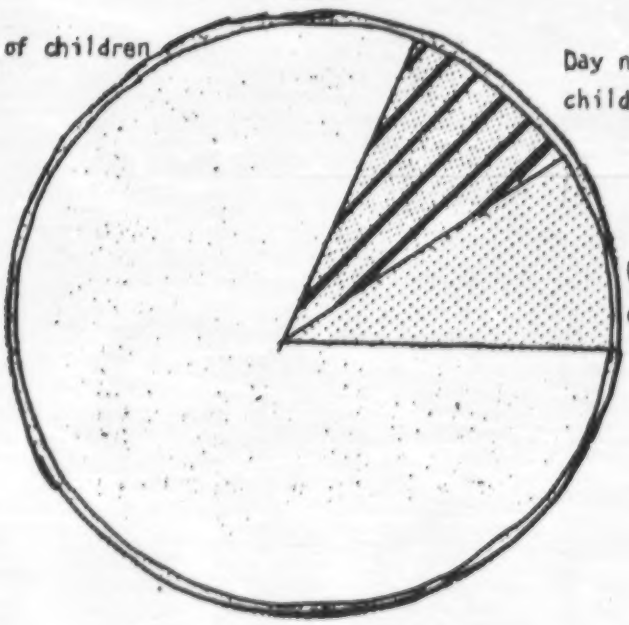
0-6 years
Total no. of children
4[illegible]. The mothers
of 258,[illegible] of whom work
more than 20 hrs./week.



Day-nursery places for
children under 7 years = 64,427

Family day-care places for
children under 7 years = [illegible]

0-2 years
Total no. of children
194,077.



Day nursery places for
children under 3 years = 18,000

Family day-care places for
children under 3 years = 19,000

Day nursery places

Family day-care places

No community care

CHILDREN IN DAY NURSERIES AND FAMILY DAY CARE